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Letter dated 10 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a communiqué from the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, dated 6 March 2003, concerning the situation in Ituri.

My Government would be grateful if you would have this text and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Atoki **Ileka**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 10 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Press communiqué from the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo concerning the situation in Ituri

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, deeply concerned at the suffering of the civilian population in the Ituri region, deplores the pursuit and intensification of the war in that part of the country.

Since the beginning of this week, Mahagi, Aru, Mandro and other villages have seen acts of violence generated by members of the Union des patriotes congolais (UPC) headed by Thomas Lubanga.

Since this morning, moreover, clashes have continued in other villages, reaching as far as Bunia.

In view of the foregoing, the Government of the Republic wishes to impress upon national and international public opinion that it is neither directly nor indirectly involved in this cycle of violence, which has again plunged the Ituri region into a grave humanitarian disaster.

Nevertheless, mindful of the need to restore peace throughout the country, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

1. Demands the strict implementation of the Luanda Agreement of 6 September 2002, signed by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of the Republic of Uganda, on the withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, cooperation and the normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries, as amended at the consultative summit between the Heads of State, His Excellency Joseph Kabila and His Excellency Yoweri Museveni, held in Dar es Salaam on 10 February 2003.

2. Expects all the parties involved in this conflict to put an end to it and to encourage the rapid launching of the Preparatory Committee for the Ituri Pacification Commission, the establishment of which holds out hope for the Congolese.

3. Requests the warring parties to respect international humanitarian law by protecting the lives of civilians, who are always direct or indirect victims, as called for in the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Protocols Additional thereto.

4. Encourages the delegates to the inter-Congolese dialogue currently meeting in Pretoria to put the nation's higher interest first.

5. Calls upon the international community in general, and the Security Council in particular, to:

- Demand immediately that the Republic of Uganda and the Republic of Rwanda take urgent measures to protect the human rights and lives of the civilian populations in the territories under their control and to resolutely refrain from acts likely to inflame the Ituri region;

– Avert the risk of clashes between the two armies, Rwandan and Ugandan, like those which occurred in Kisangani.

Kinshasa, 6 March 2003